



# LIVINGSTON COUNTY TRANSIT MASTER PLAN

FINAL PLAN

March 5, 2019

Prepared for



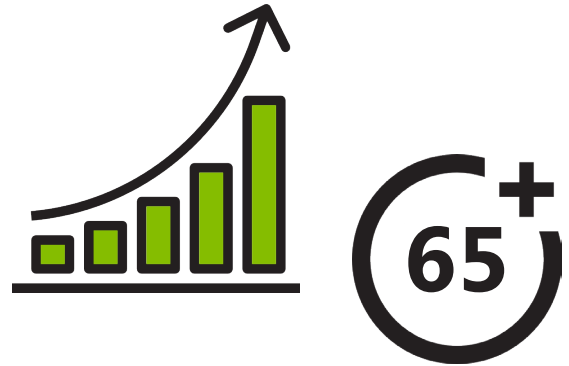
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## INTRODUCTION

Livingston County is experiencing change on several fronts. As **one of the fastest growing counties in Michigan**, has added more than 5,000 residents since 2010 and is projected to reach a population of **more than 240,000 people by 2045**. The County's population is also **aging**: individuals 65 years old and up currently account for 17 percent of the population, and **40 percent of today's population will be at least 65 in the next 10 years**. The current public transportation



option for traveling within the County is through Livingston Essential Transportation Service (**LETS**), a County department that provides dial-a-ride services. While LETS is available to the general public, its services are often **overbooked**. With these demographic changes and transit system conditions comes an opportunity to assess how transportation options might better serve those who are traveling into, within, and out of the County.

The Livingston County Transit Master Plan took a comprehensive look at existing demographic, employment, travel pattern, and transit conditions; previous plans and studies; and public and stakeholder input to determine what transit system enhancements can be made to improve the quality of life in the County. With this information as a foundation, the Plan presents a set of **actions** to be taken in the **short, mid, and long term** to work towards a set of **goals** that capture what the County's transportation system is envisioned to be, along with a framework for **funding and governance** to achieve their implementation.



The Transit Master Plan seeks to **optimize the existing transit system to better serve today's transit users**, but also acknowledges that limited needs can be met with the resources that LETS has. The **broader needs of the County's changing population** may be more effectively met with **transportation services that are not currently available**. Therefore, the Plan is also meant to address these existing gaps in service provision.

Many of the Plan's actions target **the County's highest transit demand areas** with the purpose of sufficiently **building out services** to **provide adequate service to the outermost areas** of the County.

The Livingston County Transit Master Plan will serve as a **tool to assist decision-makers** in making adjustments to Livingston County's public transportation system to **meet the community's present and future needs**.

## PLAN GOALS

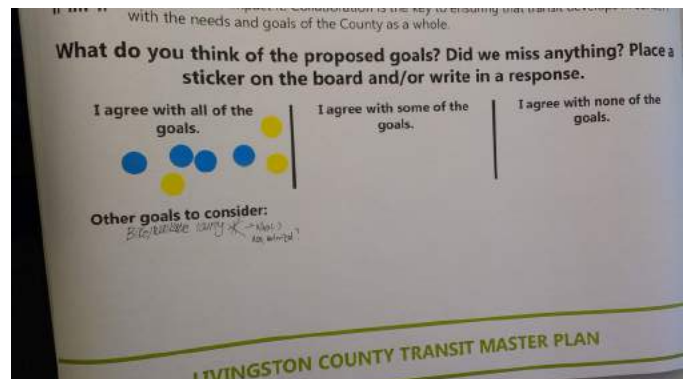
There are a number of different routes the County and its partners could take in order to improve its transit system. However, successful implementation hinges on whether or not the steps taken fit the County's context and broader goals, and whether or not they are prioritized and supported by the public. Therefore, in order to guide the Transit Master Plan process, a set of goals were identified for the actions coming out of the Plan to accomplish. The development of these goals began with a review of the County's existing priorities which are documented in the 2018 Livingston County Master Plan, stakeholder and municipality transportation needs assessments, the results of a survey conducted by the Livingston County Transportation Coalition in 2016-17, and other previously completed plans. Therefore, the goals of the Transit Master Plan are meant to align with previously established goals, including the County Board's strategic planning goals of economic development, visionary planning, safety, roads, technology, communications, and equity.

Further information was gathered from an initial public survey. Once drafted, the goals were shared with the public via an open house, stakeholder workshops, and a public survey. These avenues provided the opportunity for the goals to be refined. The goals were then adjusted to reflect the feedback received.

The four major goals identified by the Livingston County Transit Master Plan are to:

- Improve the system efficiency of current service for existing and new customers;
- Develop new services that expand the customer base and respond to unserved needs;
- Provide regional connections; and
- Collaborate across communities, agencies, and sectors to have multimodal transportation considered as part of the County's development.

Each individual goal is described in greater detail on the following pages.



## PLAN GOALS

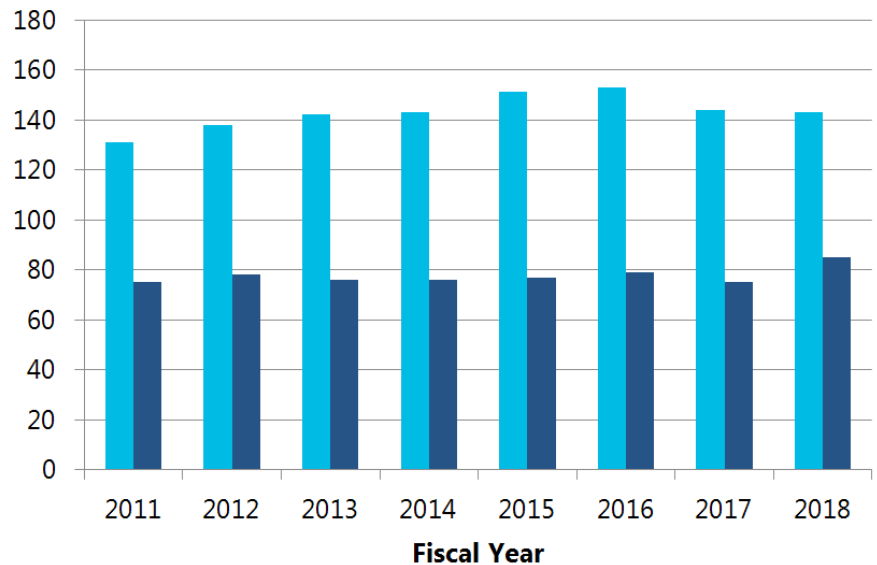


Improve the **SYSTEM EFFICIENCY** of current service for existing and new customers.

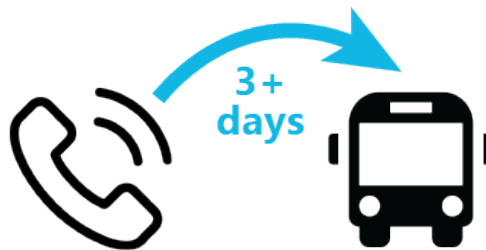
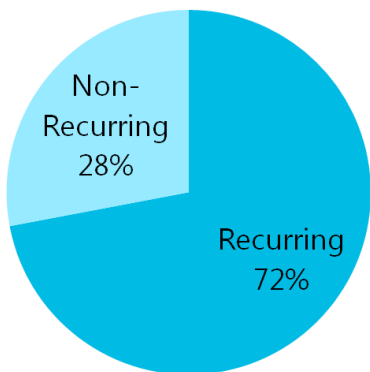
LETS ridership has **grown** steadily over recent years, and the agency currently provides an average of **12,000 passenger trips per month**.

Demand is exceeding supply. With the majority of LETS trips made by **regular customers on a recurring basis**, this means that the service tends to book up, limiting the amount of on-demand rides that can be granted to other customers: LETS denies about **700 rides per year due to limited capacity**.

■ Total Passenger Trips (1,000) ■ Total Vehicle Miles (10,000)



### LETS Vehicle Trips

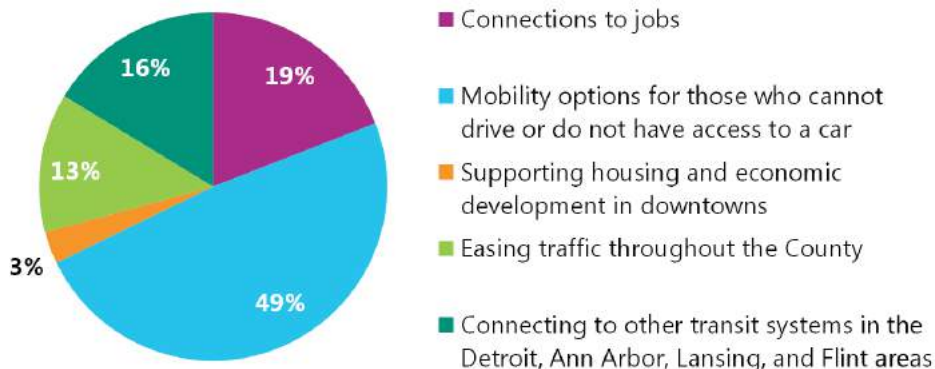


The level of **demand in core areas makes it difficult for LETS to serve the outlying areas of the County**. There is a need to do as much as possible with current resources to maximize the number of trips provided.

At the same time, LETS can do more to establish a more customer-friendly system that does not require such a **long lead time for reservations**.

Ensuring that the current LETS system runs efficiently to provide **sufficient service for the many residents who need it** is the foundational goal of the Livingston County Transit Master Plan.

### Public Ranking of the Top Priority for the Transit Master Plan





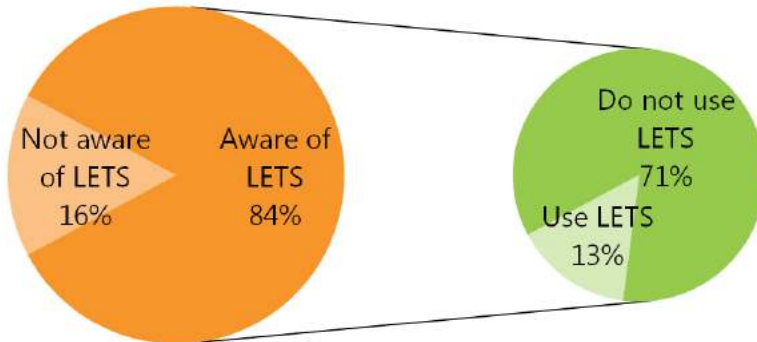
## PLAN GOALS



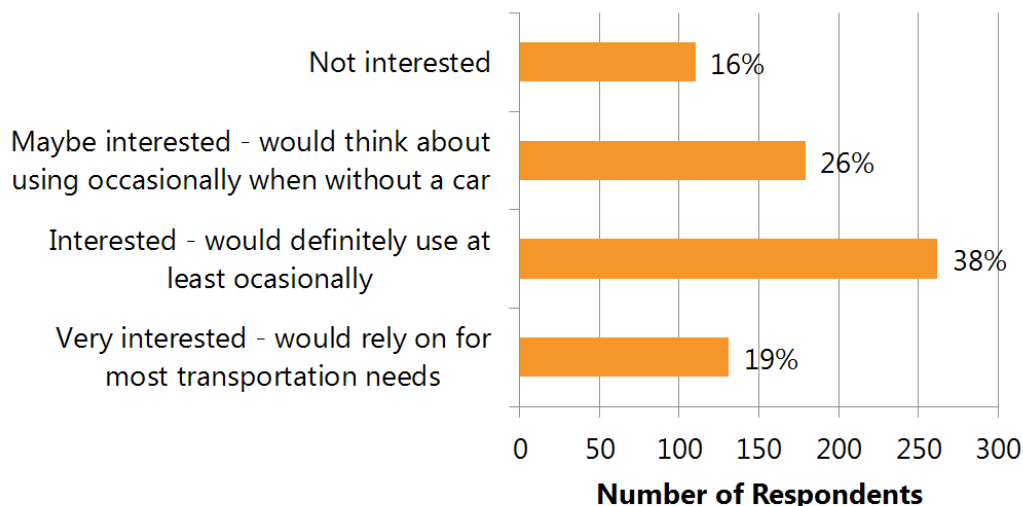
Develop **NEW & EXPANDED SERVICES** that respond to unserved needs and enable more customers to access the system.

Despite its **widely recognized** brand, LETS goes **unutilized** by most of the County's residents.

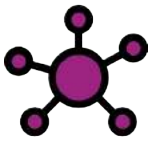
In addition to addressing system efficiency barriers to ridership, the County has the opportunity to more **effectively meet residents' and workers' diverse transportation needs** by increasing the capacity and reach of its dial-a-ride system as well as focusing new services in its core ridership demand zones. The expansion and addition of services needs to be undertaken in a way that **does not remove services from LETS' existing base of core customers** who rely on the service.



**If Livingston County were to expand transit options, how interested would you be in riding transit to get to and from your destination?**

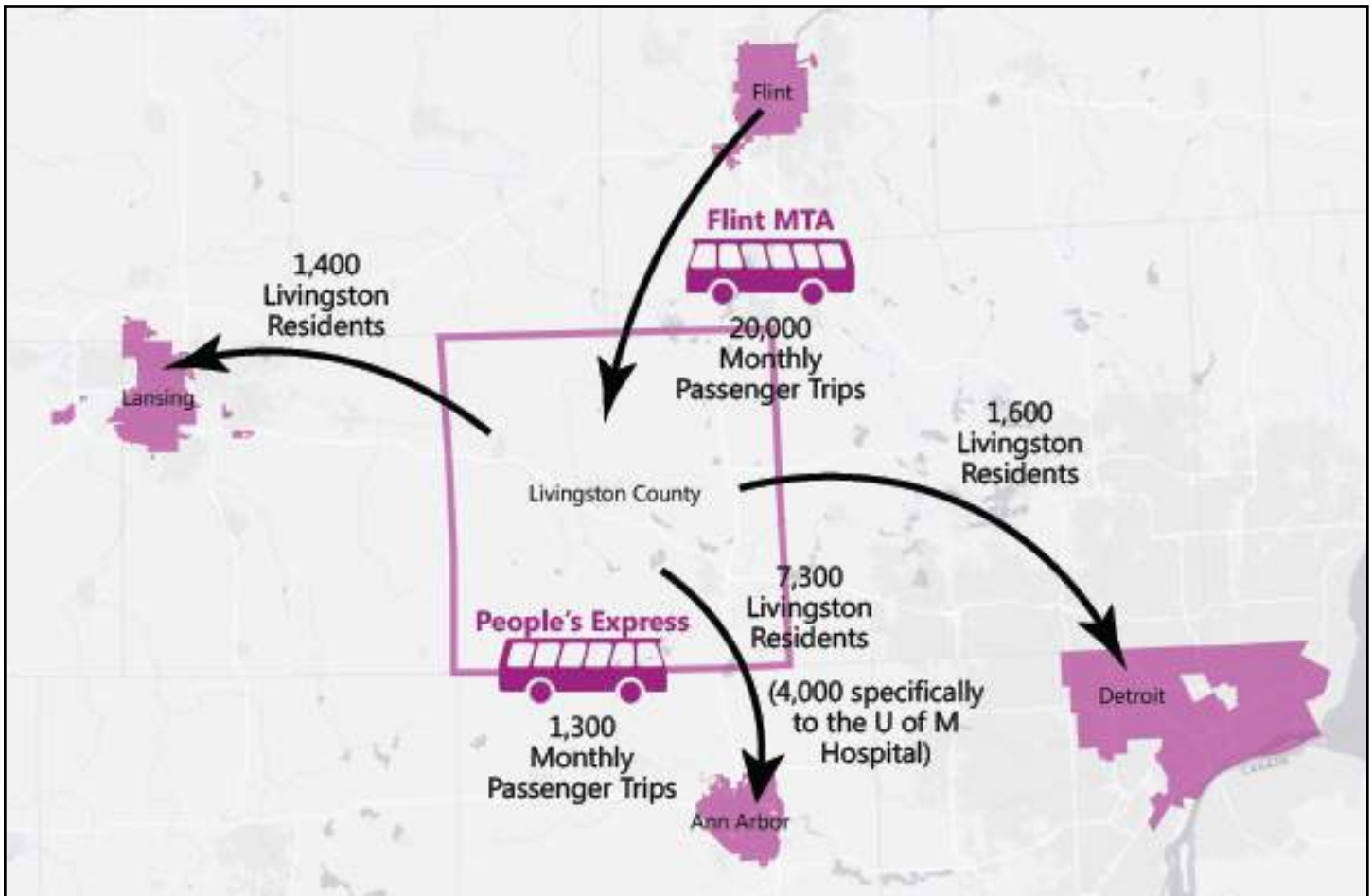


## PLAN GOALS



### Provide **REGIONAL CONNECTIONS**.

As a **commuter county centrally located** between multiple major cities and in proximity to an international airport, Livingston County is uniquely positioned to benefit from regional transit connections. Commuting data and public engagement indicate that the two largest opportunities are for service from Livingston County to Detroit Metro Airport and Ann Arbor.



As **traffic, parking** in Ann Arbor, and **labor shortages** in Livingston County continue to present challenges for commuters and businesses, transit can provide a much needed **transportation alternative** to Livingston residents and workers alike. Regional transit connections would likely be provided by agencies other than LETS and/or entirely new organizations. There is also a need to partner and provide connections to other transit agencies in Flint, Ann Arbor and Lansing.

## PLAN GOALS



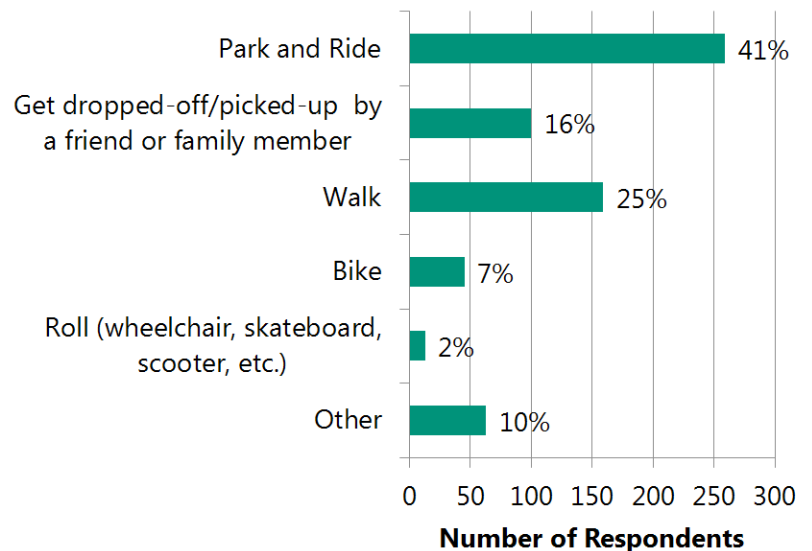
### Collaborate across communities, agencies, and sectors to have **MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION** considered as part of the County's development.

Ensuring that Livingston residents and workers are able to get where they need to go is a key component of the County's development that requires thinking more broadly about how to meet transportation needs. LETS and other transit services are only one piece of a comprehensive system. An enhanced system of walking and biking infrastructure would **complement and support transit services**.

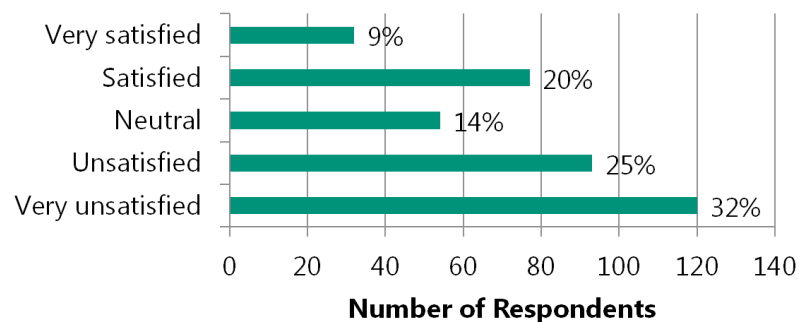
Many of the County's core services like schools and grocery stores are currently **inaccessible by foot or bicycle**, and those who do not drive must **travel unsafely** to reach their destination or are **prevented from traveling** entirely. Even with the provision of transit, making **first- and last-mile connections** to final destinations is limited by what sidewalks and paths are (or are not) in place.

**Emerging mobility options** such as Uber/Lyft-type services, car- and bike-sharing, electric scooters, and electric and/or autonomous vehicles, while not readily available in Livingston County right now, are considerations to incorporate into today's decisions about transit, walking, and biking. Communication, coordination, and actions taken in partnership among the many different parties responsible for the County's development will ensure that the transportation system develops **in concert with the needs and goals of the County** as a whole.

How would you get to and from your transit stop?



How satisfied are you with the existing bike and pedestrian system in Livingston County?





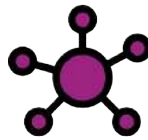
## ACTIONS

The Livingston County Transit Master Plan has identified the following actions related to the four goals, each of which could be focus areas over the next 5-10 years. The actions include targeted enhancements in the County's areas of highest transit demand that will, in turn, enable better quality and availability of service to the rest of the County.



### System Efficiency

1. Diversified Fleet
2. Trip Management System Improvements
3. New Operations Center



### Regional Connections

8. Detroit Metro Airport Service
9. Commuter Service to Ann Arbor
10. Connections to Out-of-County Providers



### New & Expanded Services

4. Weekday Service Expansion
5. Expanded Weekend Service
6. Grand River Avenue Bus Route
7. Community Shuttles

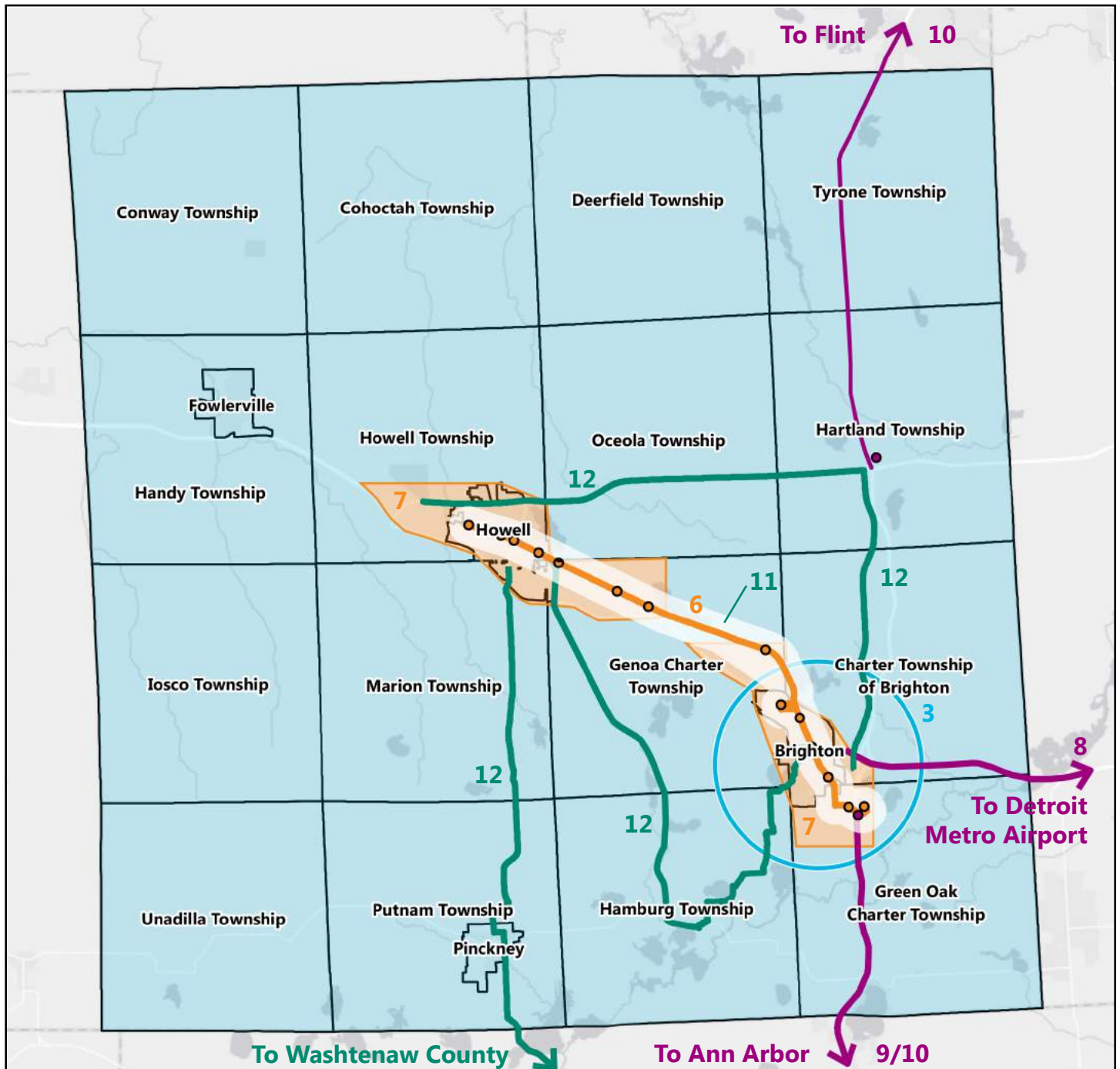


### Multimodal Transportation

11. Grand River Avenue Sidewalk Network
12. County-wide Bike & Pedestrian Connections
13. Passenger Hub

## ACTIONS

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>1</b> <i>Diversified Fleet</i>         | <b>8</b> Detroit Metro Airport Service           | <b>12</b> County-Wide Bike & Pedestrian Connections       |
| <b>2</b> <i>Trip Management System</i>    | <b>9</b> Commuter Service to Ann Arbor           | <b>13</b> <i>Passenger Hub</i>                            |
| <b>3</b> New Operations Center            | <b>10</b> Connections to Out-of-County Providers |   |
| <b>4</b> <i>Weekday Service Expansion</i> | <b>11</b> Grand River Ave Sidewalk Network       | <i>Italicized actions do not have a specific location</i> |
| <b>5</b> <i>Expanded Weekend Service</i>  |  |   |
| <b>6</b> Grand River Ave Bus Route        |  |   |
| <b>7</b> Community Shuttles               |  |   |



## 1. DIVERSIFIED FLEET



The current LETS fleet mostly consists of small buses with 11 to 16 seats. However, there are rarely that many passengers on a LETS bus at one time. The vast majority of LETS trips carry 1-2 passengers. Minivans are better suited to these trips and are less expensive to purchase and maintain. Balancing out the LETS fleet to include more vans would help alleviate capacity constraints, enable LETS to provide on-demand service to more customers, and address the public's concern that buses often seem to be empty.



Vehicle Type	Typical Cost per Vehicle	Current Share of LETS Fleet	Seated Capacity
Minivan	\$36,000	8%	4
Ford Transit	\$70,000	4%	7
Small Bus / Cutaway	\$80,000	64%	11 to 16
Medium Duty Bus	\$100,000	24%	26 to 32

### COST

This action is assumed to have no additional cost for LETS.

### LOCAL SHARE

Funding for vehicle purchases typically comes from a combination of federal and state funds. No local share is projected.

### TIMELINE

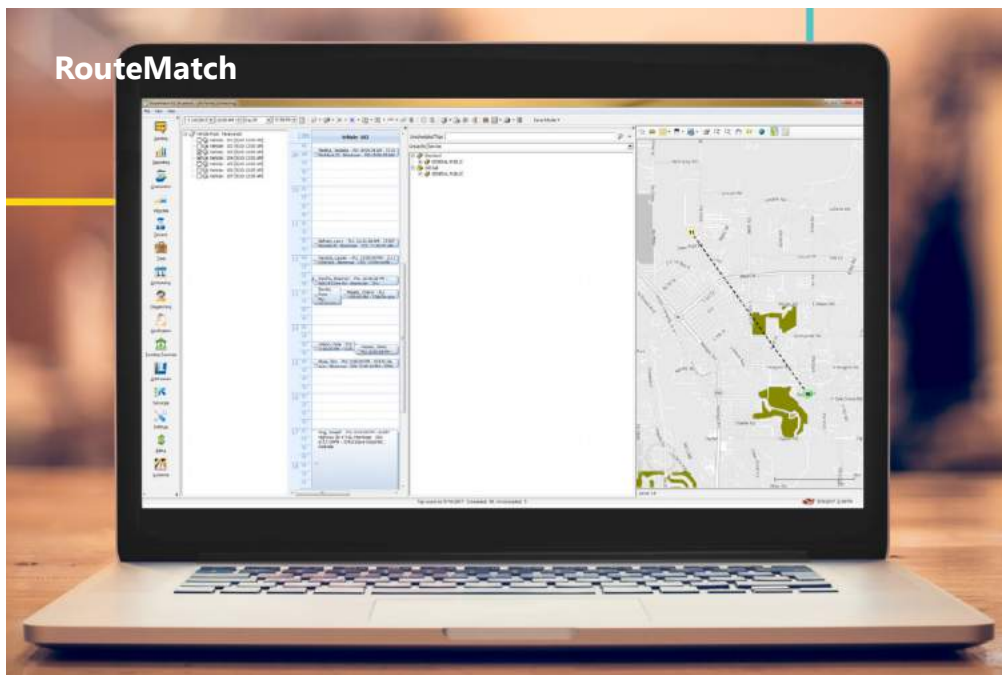
1-2 years

3-5 years

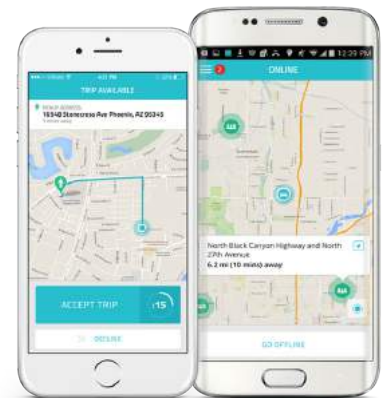
5+ years

In 2019, 2 more vans will be added to the LETS fleet. Over time, as opportunities for purchasing additional vehicles or replacing old ones arise, the fleet can be balanced out with smaller vehicles.

## 2. TRIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS



Veyo



As the number of trips it provides has increased over the years, LETS is outgrowing the software that it uses to translate ride reservations into schedules for drivers due to the software's limited tools for scheduling and routing. The software is also hosted on the County network which presents difficulties in coordinating LETS' needs with the County IT department. With a large volume of recurring rides that limit the availability of on-demand rides, service denials are notable customer service challenges. LETS has set aside budget for a potential new software that would better serve the agency's needs. Tools for automated scheduling, optimized routing, online or mobile trip payment, and the ability to host the software in the cloud are some target specifications for the potential new software. These improvements upon the current trip management system would help identify more opportunities to pool rides among customers, freeing up capacity for currently unserved needs and additional ridership. Reducing the amount of time that customers must reserve their ride in advance, sending automated notifications to customers, enabling customers to track their bus' location, and providing additional methods of payment would also improve customer experience.

**TIMELINE****1-2 years**

3-5 years

5+ years

LETS intends to upgrade its trip management system in the near term, seeking to leverage it for more efficient dispatching and improved customer service.

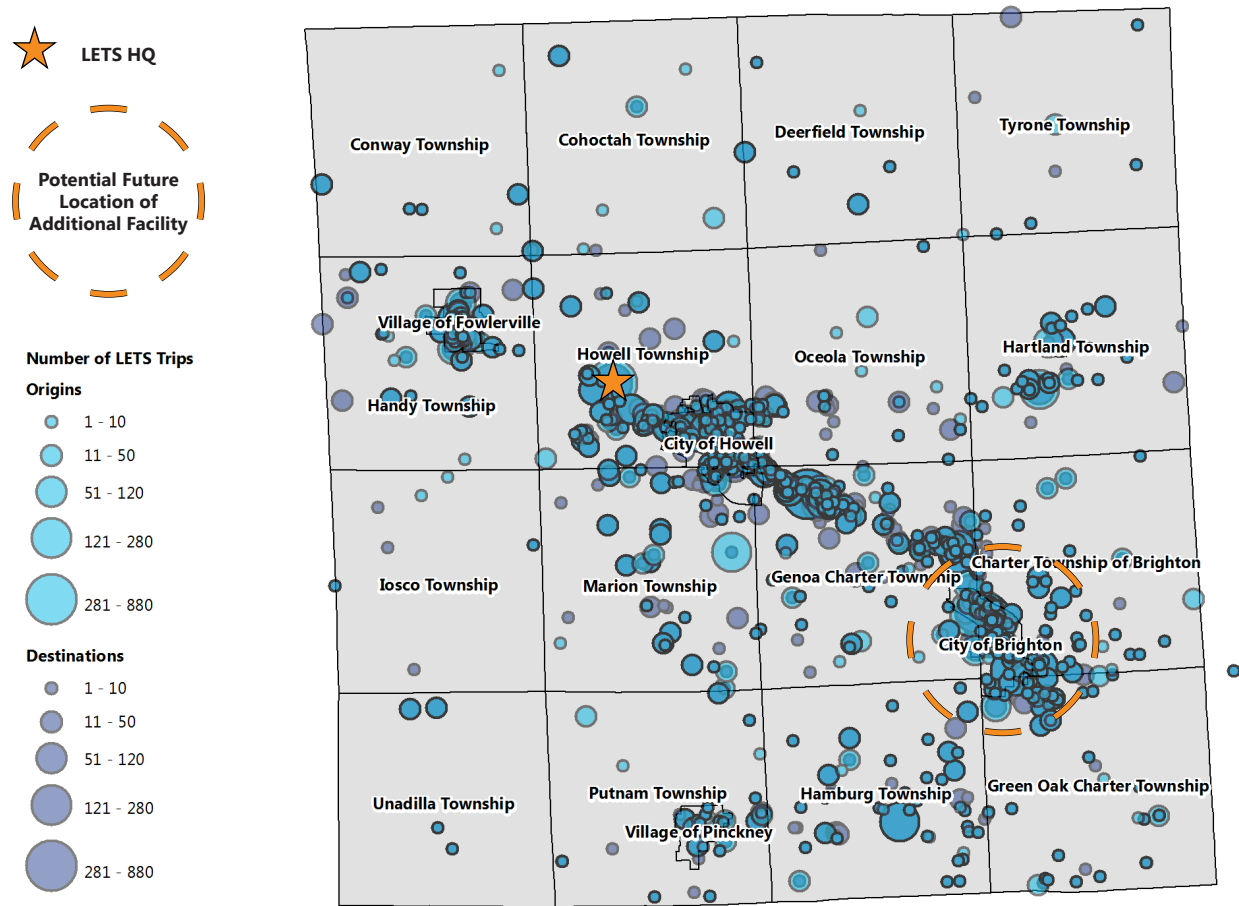
**COST**

LETS has set aside \$50,000 - \$150,000 as part of its 2019 budget for new trip management software.

**LOCAL SHARE**

No local share is projected.

3. NEW OPERATIONS CENTER



LETS is currently headquartered west of Howell, but the bulk of its pick-ups and drop-offs occur further east in the Grand River Avenue / I-96 corridor from Howell to Brighton. While LETS should plan to maintain the current facility, having a second facility located closer to these locations would decrease dead-head time for drivers and ride time for passengers, and would enable buses to be more readily dispatched to serve ride requests that come in throughout the day. The new facility would include a fueling station, bathroom, secured parking for LETS vehicles, 10 to 15 parking spots for visitors, and space for dispatch staff.

TIMELINE		
1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
Identify & design site	Develop new facility	

**COST** \$6 million - \$7 million

**LOCAL SHARE** \$56,000 per year

- Bus garage
- Dispatch, driver support, and training
- Restrooms / locker rooms
- Break area / conference space
- Propane fueling station
- Lighting



4. WEEKDAY SERVICE EXPANSION



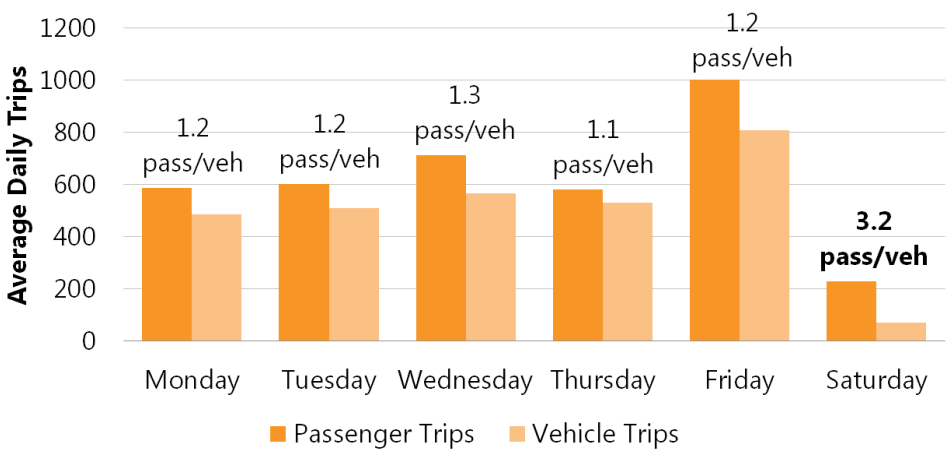
Demand for LETS service is more than the agency can currently handle: LETS denies about 700 rides per year due to limited capacity. With such a large service area, the agency struggles to meet travel needs on a County-wide basis. As a result, the most common transportation need identified by both municipalities and stakeholders was increased capacity. Increasing the level of service by putting additional vehicles and drivers out on the road to fulfill ride requests would directly address these issues.



TIMELINE		
1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
It will take some time to build LETS' capacity to a level that can provide more service.		
<b>25% Increase in Capacity</b>	<b>50% Increase in Capacity</b>	
<b>COST</b>	<b>COST</b>	
\$260,000 Capital	\$520,000 Capital	
\$743,000 Operations & Maintenance (O&M) per year	\$1.5 million O&M per year	
<b>LOCAL SHARE</b>	<b>LOCAL SHARE</b>	
\$417,000 per year	\$834,000 per year	

5. EXPANDED WEEKEND SERVICE

CURRENT LETS HOURS
<b>Monday through Friday</b> 6am - 9pm (Dispatch hours: 8am - 4:30pm)
<b>Saturday</b> 7am - 4:30pm
<b>Closed Sundays</b>

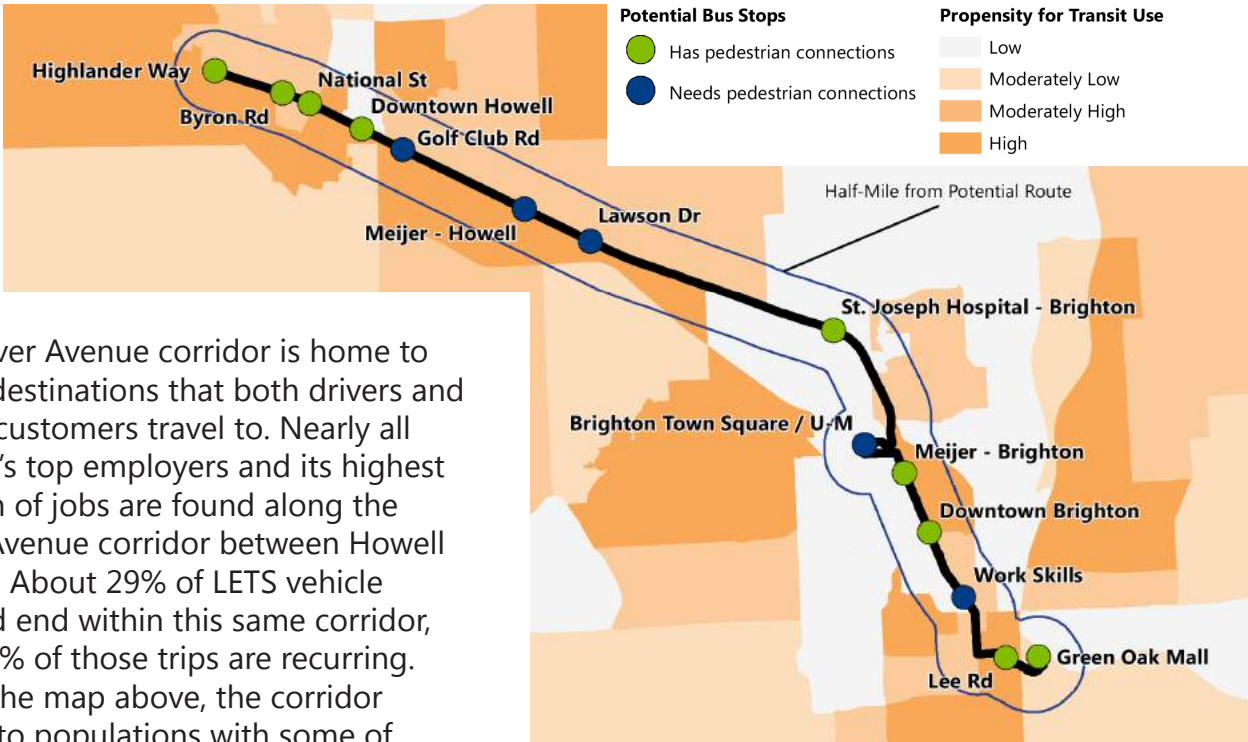


Saturdays are one of LETS’ most over-booked days, accounting for nearly one-fifth of total passenger trips and booking up 2-3 weeks in advance. Demand for more weekend service, especially on Sundays, was strongly expressed in both rounds of public input. Improving the availability of service on Saturdays by dispatching additional vehicles and introducing service on Sundays with similar hours to Saturday would help address currently unserved needs of customers and potentially expand the customer base. This can be accomplished utilizing the existing fleet of LETS vehicles, without any additional capital cost.

TIMELINE		
1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
1 additional vehicle on Saturdays & 1 vehicle on Sundays	Further expansion of Saturdays & Sundays	
<b>Expanded Saturday Service</b>	<b>New Sunday Service</b>	<b>Further Expansion</b>
<b>COST</b> \$129,000 per year	<b>COST</b> \$67,000 per year	<b>COST</b> \$395,000 per year
<b>LOCAL SHARE</b> \$53,000 per year	<b>LOCAL SHARE</b> \$27,000 per year	<b>LOCAL SHARE</b> \$162,000 per year



6. GRAND RIVER AVE BUS ROUTE



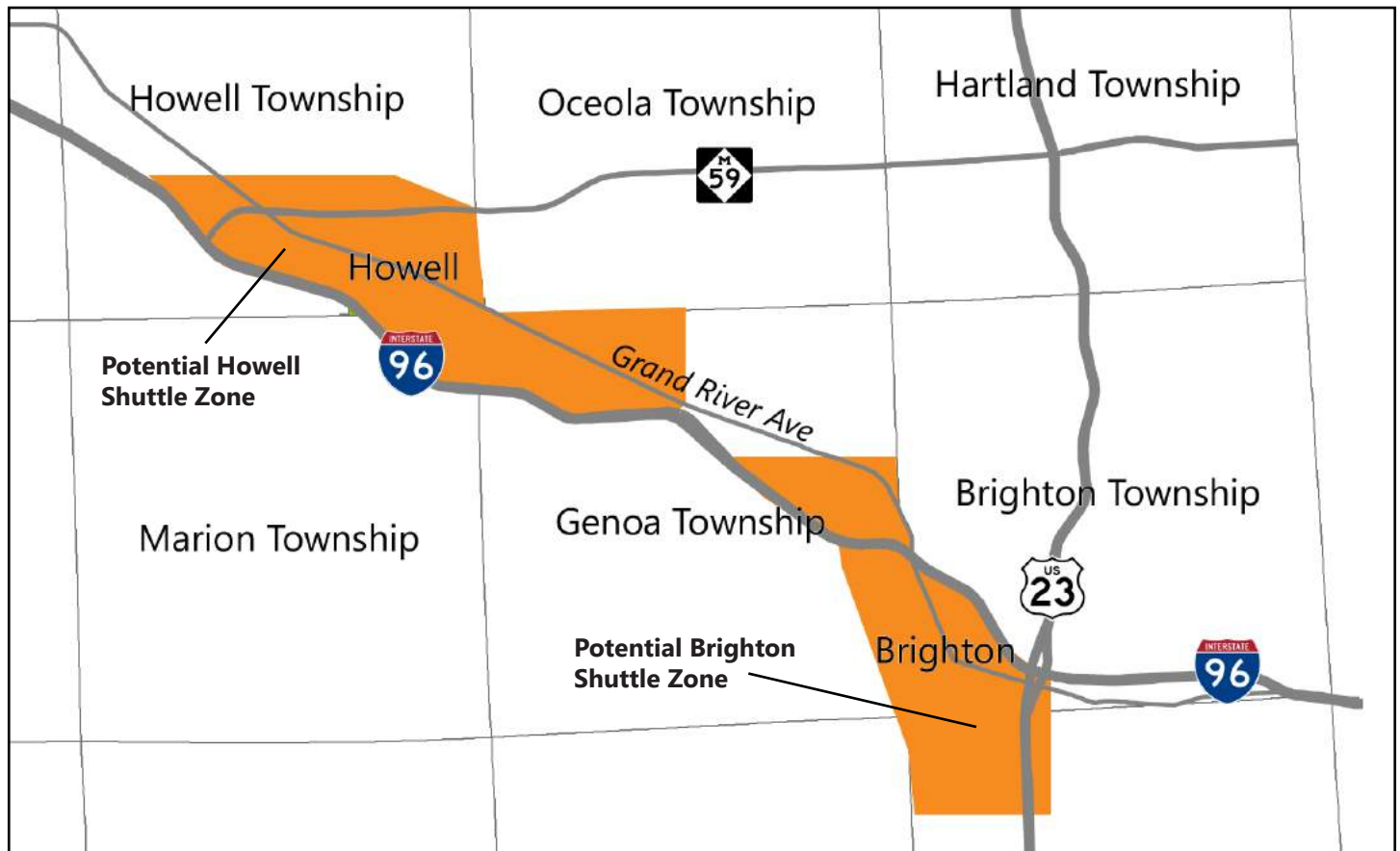
The Grand River Avenue corridor is home to many of the destinations that both drivers and current LETS customers travel to. Nearly all of the county’s top employers and its highest concentration of jobs are found along the Grand River Avenue corridor between Howell and Brighton. About 29% of LETS vehicle trips start and end within this same corridor, and about 19% of those trips are recurring. As shown in the map above, the corridor is also home to populations with some of the highest propensity for transit use. This presents the opportunity to implement a bus route with designated stops on the corridor. The map above shows one possible bus route, based on popular LETS destinations and land uses along the corridor, that would have a 50-minute end-to-end time. In its early stages, to help identify the best bus stop locations, the bus route could operate under a wave system (patrons flag down the bus) or a flag system (temporary flags are installed for the bus to stop at). Final bus stop locations would be determined with further input from stakeholders and the public, and would be evaluated based on factors such as proximity to transit-dependent populations, sidewalk connections, convenience to signalized pedestrian crossings, availability of parking, property owner enthusiasm, and preferred spacing between stops for efficient travel times. The bus route would provide a readily-available, reliable transportation option that does not require reservations or advance notice, and would free up capacity for more LETS trips by shifting a portion of current dial-a-ride ridership to the bus route. Furthermore, because this service would provide a level of flexibility in planning one’s day that dial-a-ride cannot offer, more customers would be able to use the service.

TIMELINE		
1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
	Hourly service	Service every 30 minutes
See related: <a href="#">Grand River Ave Sidewalk Network</a> on page 19		

Hourly Service	Every 30 Minutes
<b>COST</b> \$510,000 Capital \$359,000 O&M per year	<b>COST</b> \$616,000 Capital \$718,000 O&M per year
<b>LOCAL SHARE</b> \$201,000 per year	<b>LOCAL SHARE</b> \$402,000 per year



## 7. COMMUNITY SHUTTLES



Many of the County's jobs, core services, and activity centers are concentrated in Howell and Brighton. About 6 percent of all LETS passenger trips are entirely within Howell, and about 6 percent are entirely within Brighton. Providing on-demand community shuttles that circulate within one or both of these cities has the potential to improve LETS' fleet utilization, more readily respond to transportation needs, free up capacity for trips to and from outer areas of the County, and expand the customer base. The service could operate on a more on-demand, on-call basis for short trips within these zones. As a starting point, it is possible that utilizing one or two buses that are already in the area to pilot this service during off-peak hours could test the service's success in the short term.

### TIMELINE

1-2 years

3-5 years

**5+ years**

Implementation is dependent on community support and developing the tools to pilot on-call service within these zones.

### COST

\$160,000 Capital

\$863,000 O&M per year

### LOCAL SHARE

\$483,000 per year

8. DETROIT METRO AIRPORT SERVICE



Michigan Flyer currently provides motorcoach connections between East Lansing, Ann Arbor, and the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, but does not stop in Livingston County. Providing transit service to the airport was one of the most highly demanded options in both rounds of public input, and establishing a Michigan Flyer-type service for Livingston County would help meet this demand. A pickup location in Brighton off of the I-96 Grand River Avenue exit is likely in the short term with the potential to be incorporated with a passenger hub in the future. One-way fares would be established to recover a significant proportion of the operating costs, as currently occurs with the Michigan Flyer / Air Ride service. The service would run hourly, similar to the current East Lansing Michigan Flyer service with about 14 round trips per day.

**TIMELINE**

1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
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A plan for the new service is under development, which will need to be bid out to contractors.

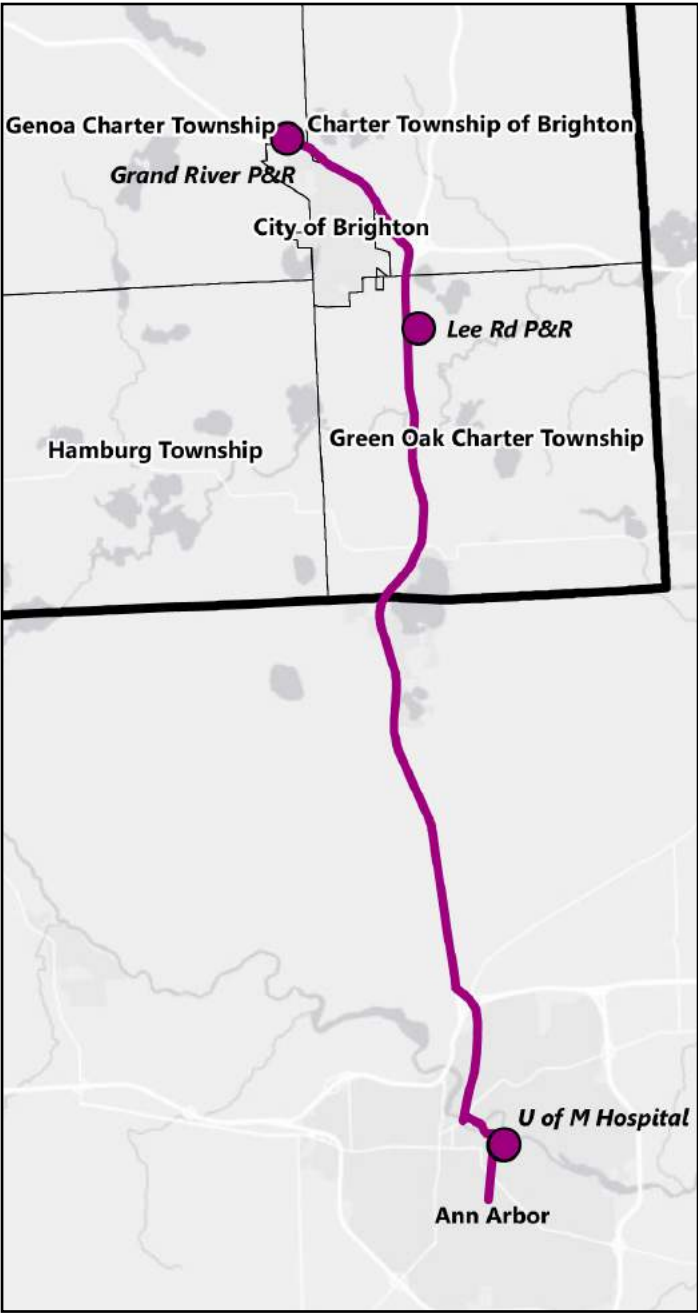
**COST** \$2.3 million per year

**LOCAL SHARE**

Costs will be covered by a combination of fares, service contracts, private contributions, and state funding. No local share is projected.



9. COMMUTER SERVICE TO ANN ARBOR



People’s Express currently provides a commuter route between the Lee Road & Fieldcrest Drive Park & Ride in Brighton and the University of Michigan (U of M) Hospital in Ann Arbor with four trips into Ann Arbor in the morning and four trips back to Brighton in the afternoon. Each trip has an average of 10 to 15 passengers, and the service transports an average of 1,260 riders per month. The market for commuter transportation to Ann Arbor is much larger than the current People’s Express ridership: more than 7,000 Livingston County residents work in Ann Arbor, and about 4,000 of them work specifically in the U of M Hospital area. Furthermore, commuter service to Ann Arbor was consistently among the most popular options chosen through public input.

In the future, commuter service to Ann Arbor should be expanded with pick-up and drop-off locations in Brighton (one potentially at the current Park & Ride that People’s Express uses and one farther north), at the University of Michigan Hospital, and at the Blake Transit Center in Ann Arbor. Service should be added during both peak and off-peak hours with a total of about 13 round trips per day.

**COST** \$165,000 per year

**LOCAL SHARE** \$54,000 per year

TIMELINE		
1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
	Initiate the service	Expand based on demand
Implementation is dependent on regional partners such as AAATA.		

10. CONNECTIONS TO OUT-OF-COUNTY TRANSIT PROVIDERS



The Flint Mass Transportation Authority (MTA)’s 15 Regional Routes to Livingston County transport nearly 700 passengers each day between Flint and manufacturing employers in Brighton and Howell. The large MTA buses must currently navigate through industrial parks to pick passengers up and drop them off near building entrances, a job that could be better filled by smaller vehicles like LETS’. Establishing a transfer point at US-23 and M-59, potentially at the Meijer parking lot, and establishing a single fare for trips via both agencies would enable many of these trips to be made more efficiently and would provide access to a wider array of employers in Livingston County to help address worker shortages. In addition, with the implementation of expanded commuter service to Ann Arbor, transfers between TheRide (Ann Arbor’s bus system) and commuter shuttles could be coordinated to enable customers to pay one fare for their entire trip. In the long term, connections could also be made with Lansing’s Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), using coordination with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) and Flint MTA as a model.

**TIMELINE**

1-2 years	<b>3-5 years</b>	5+ years
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Implementation is dependent on regional partners.

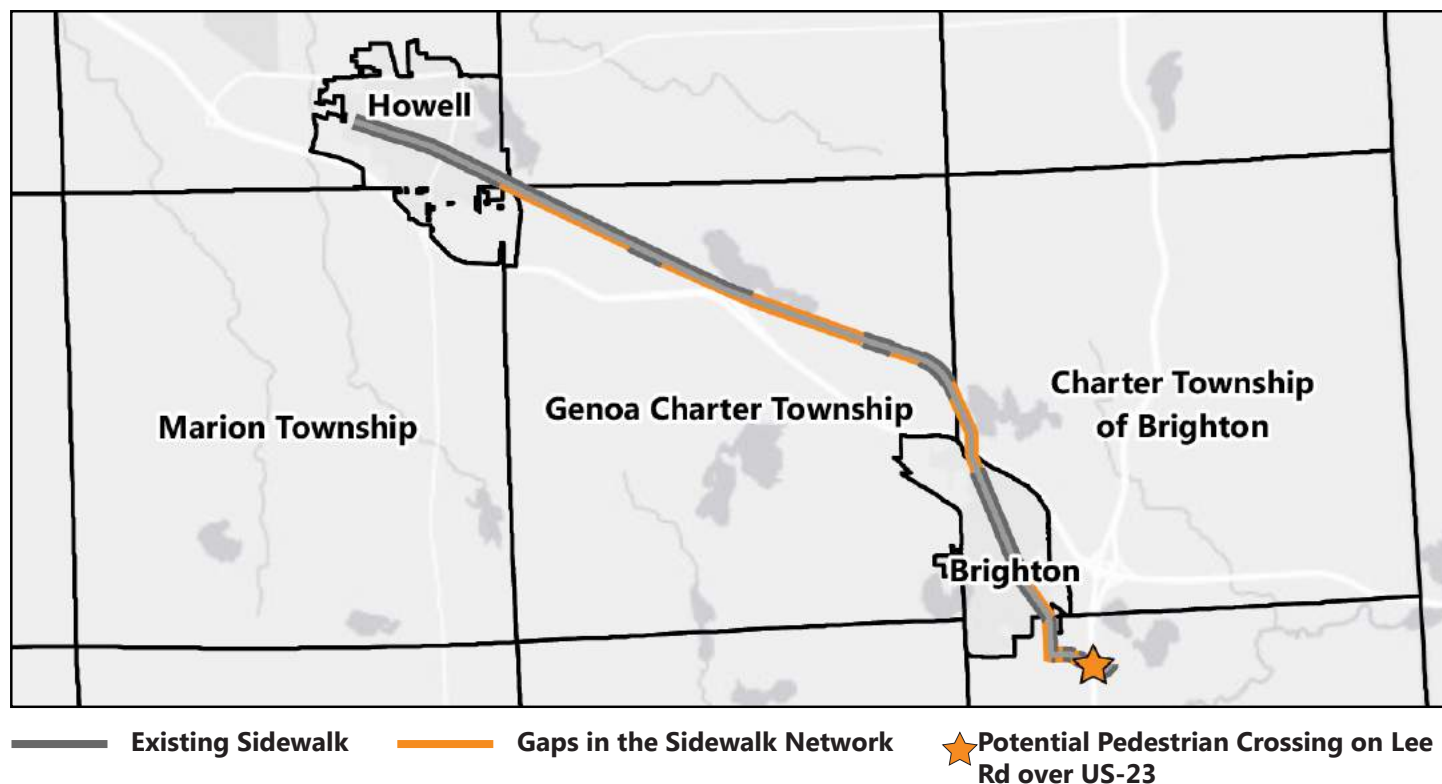
**COST**

This element is not anticipated to have a significant impact on LETS’ operating or capital costs, but would involve coordinating on schedules, stop locations and fare policies to allow for greater connectivity between Livingston County and these other out-of-County providers.

# 11. GRAND RIVER AVE SIDEWALK NETWORK

A great deal of thought has been given to the development of pathways for bikes and pedestrians in Livingston County, especially in and around parks and in the county's most urban areas. However, the development of these pathways largely centers around recreational trip purposes; there is a lack of examination of how these pathways might provide access to key destinations for those who do not drive. As a result, many Livingston residents are unsatisfied with current bike and pedestrian options.

Completing the sidewalk network along Grand River Avenue is a crucial starting point that would create more equitable access to a large concentration of core services in Livingston County, link to the Grand River Avenue bus route proposed by the Plan, and follow through on community plans supporting Grand River Avenue as a multi-modal corridor. Specific gaps in the sidewalk network are below.



## TIMELINE

1-2 years

3-5 years

5+ years

Implementation is dependent on community support and funding. A separate study could be completed to determine the details of this project.

**See related:** [Grand River Ave Bus Route](#) on page 14

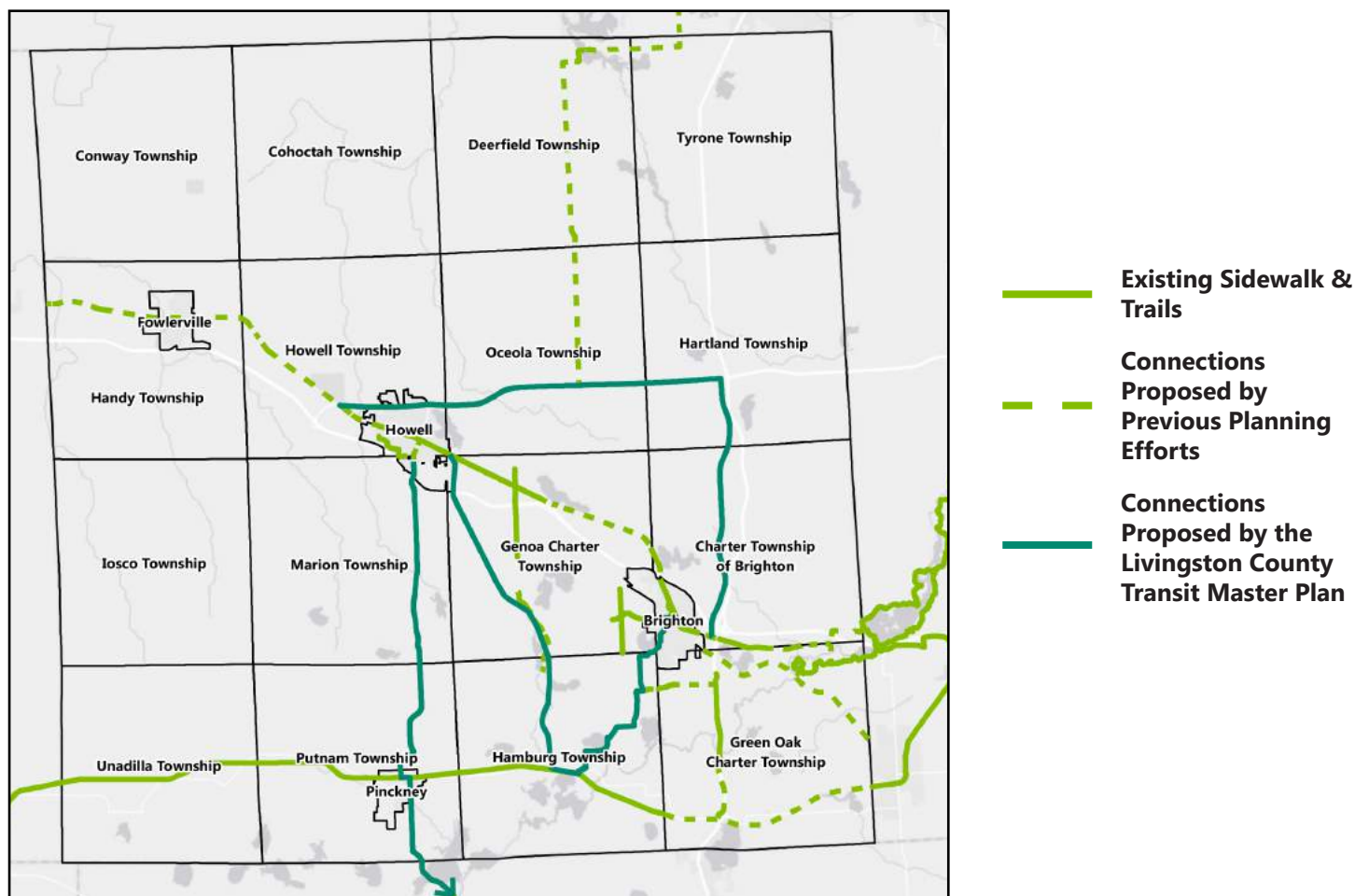
**12 miles of sidewalk & pedestrian crossing**

## COST

This action is not included in transit system costs. Funding would likely come from local and County sources with support from federal grants.

## 12. COUNTY-WIDE BIKE & PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Other major connections to prioritize in the future include north-south connections between Hamburg Township and Brighton/Howell, the section of the Lake to Lake Trail between South Lyon and Hamburg Township, connections between Hartland Township and Brighton/Howell along M-59 and US-23 (the existing paved shoulder on M-59 was noted by many members of the public as an unsafe place to bike), and a north-south connection between Howell, Pinckney, and Washtenaw County along Pinckney Road. Improving multimodal transportation options in Livingston County will require the coordination of individual commitments from the County's different entities and communities to develop a complete bike and pedestrian network.



### TIMELINE

#### 1-2 years

#### 3-5 years

#### 5+ years

Implementation is dependent on community support and funding. A separate study could be completed to determine the details of this project.

### 58 miles of trails

### COST

This action is not included in transit system costs. Funding would likely come from local and County sources with support from federal grants.



13. PASSENGER HUB



Creating a centrally-located, designated space for passengers to get on and off buses and to transfer between different services would help facilitate connections both within and outside the County. A potential location for this hub would be near the I-96 / Grand River Avenue interchange, within the City of Brighton. Connections to LETS, Flint MTA, airport service, Ann Arbor commuter service, and a potential future Grand River Avenue bus route could all be made available from this location, provided that ADA accessibility and adequate parking are incorporated. Connections to the hub via sidewalks and bike paths, and amenities like bike storage would also foster greater interconnectivity between non-motorized transportation and transit. In the future, other mobility options including Uber/Lyft-type services and autonomous vehicles could also use the passenger hub.

**TIMELINE**

1-2 years	3-5 years	<b>5+ years</b>
-----------	-----------	-----------------

Implementation is dependent on other Plan elements, community support, and funding.

**See related:** [Grand River Ave Bus Route](#) on page 14, [Detroit Metro Airport Service](#) on page 16, [Commuter Service to Ann Arbor](#) on page 17, [Connections to Out-of-County Transit Providers](#) on page 18

**COST** \$2 million - \$2.2 million














**LOCAL SHARE** \$17,000 per year

- Bus shelters
- Site improvement / landscaping
- Parking / site circulation
- Lighting
- Restrooms



## IMPLEMENTATION

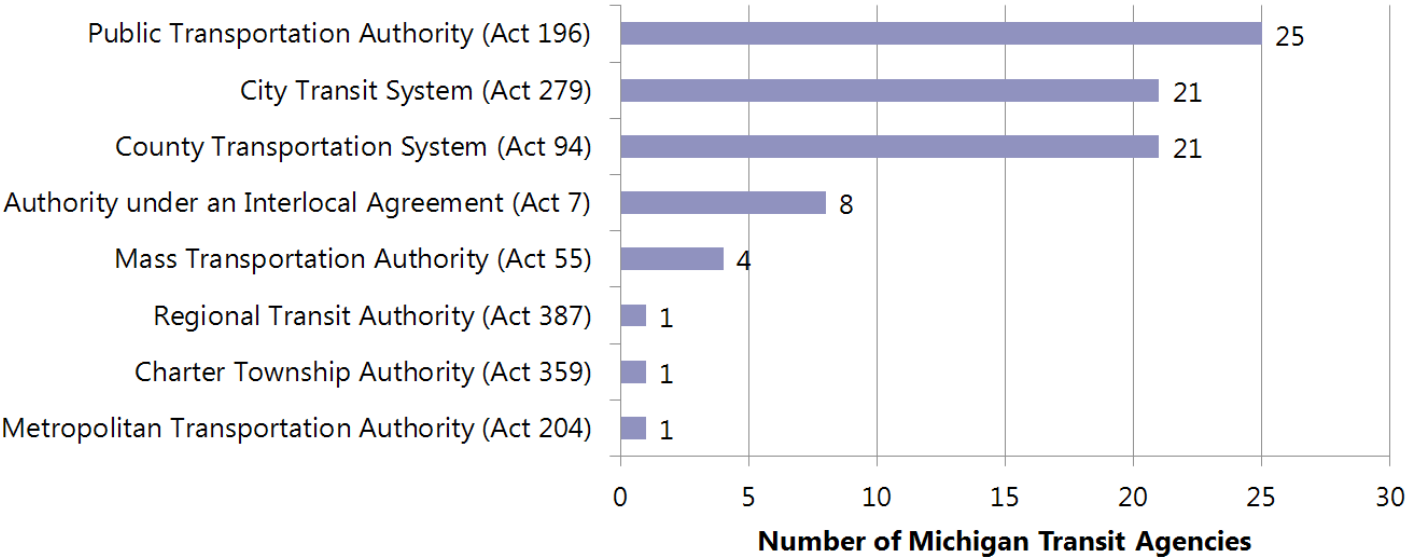
Based upon the priorities outlined by the public as well as an understanding of the likely timeline needed to accomplish each action, the chart below indicates the potential phasing of the Plan elements.

Action	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	Long-Term (5+ years)
 Detroit Metro Airport Service	Initiate service		
 Trip Management System Improvements	Upgrade to new system		
 Expanded Weekend Service	Initial expansion	Further expansion	
 New Operations Center	Identify & design site	Develop new facility	
 Connections to Out-of-County Providers		Coordinate transfers & payment	
 Weekday Service Expansion		Initial expansion	Further expansion
 Grand River Ave Bus Route		Initiate service	Increase service frequency
 Commuter Service to Ann Arbor		Initiate service	Expand service
 Community Shuttles			Initiate service
 Passenger Hub			Identify, design & implement
 Diversified Fleet	Ongoing addition of smaller vehicles		
 Grand River Ave Sidewalk Network	Ongoing planning, design & implementation		
 County-wide Bike & Pedestrian Connections	Ongoing planning, design & implementation		

Implementation of the Transit Master Plan depends on governance and funding. Although funding is a distinct decision from deciding on governance structure, the two decisions are closely linked and explored in the following sections of the Plan.

GOVERNANCE

The State of Michigan offers a number of flexible options in the form of agreements or the formation of entities that may be used by political subdivisions for transit governance. Currently, LETS is a department of the Livingston County government. Of Michigan’s 82 transit agencies, 21 are structured in this way as county transportation systems under Public Act 94. Most transit agencies in the state are organized as either a city or county transit system, but the most common governance structure overall is the public transportation authority under Public Act 196. The state also has a number of transit agencies organized under an interlocal agreement.



## GOVERNANCE

Based on the review of governance options within the state, the following are potential recommended options to grow, sustain, and govern transit in Livingston County. Each come with potential trade-offs that are discussed below.

### 1. Existing LETS Structure

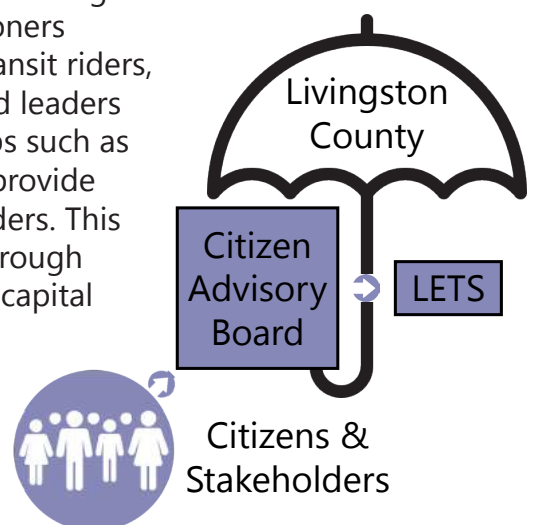
One potential option for transit governance would be to maintain the status quo with LETS under the umbrella of the Livingston County government. Under this governance structure, the County provides LETS with indirect services such as IT, Purchasing, and Human Resources. Costs for these services would likely increase if LETS had to staff these functions in-house or contract for them. In addition, the County lends funds to cover early year costs while LETS waits for federal funds to come through. Expansion of local funding sources needed to support and sustain transit could continue to be provided through general fund appropriations under this arrangement, or the County could also choose to leverage its taxing authority to create a specialized County-wide millage for LETS, the same way it has for Emergency Medical and Veteran Services. In either scenario, LETS would continue to be governed by the County Board of Commissioners and administered through the County government.



### 2. New Citizen Advisory Board

A slightly different alternative to the status quo would be to establish a new Citizen Advisory Board (or similar committee) while maintaining LETS' existing structure. Livingston County Board of Commissioners would appoint advisory board members who would include transit riders, members of the business community, healthcare providers, and leaders from the Transportation Coalition and other stakeholder groups such as seniors, schools/students, bicyclists, and environmentalists to provide policy-level representation and input for citizens and stakeholders. This advisory board would provide oversight to LETS' operations through the review of financial statements and input on budget issues, capital projects, and service delivery.

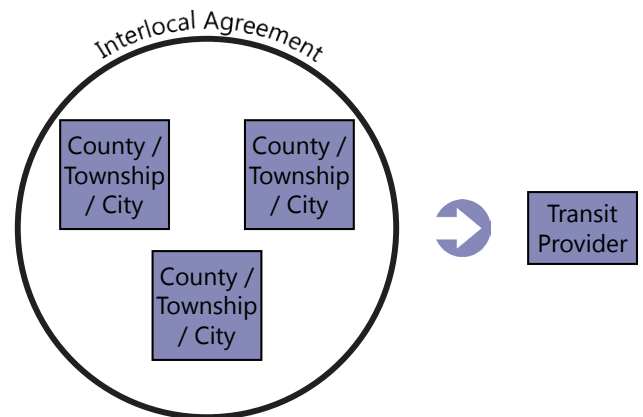
Adding a Citizen Advisory Board would maintain all of the benefits associated with the existing LETS structure with the added benefit that if a more independent governing body is warranted, the Advisory Board could facilitate its formation by garnering citizens' and the Board of Commissioners' support. However, the creation of a Citizen Advisory Board is not directly linked to any changes in transit funding, instead relying on the resources and taxing authority of the County government to assemble any additional local funding needed to expand transit services.



## GOVERNANCE

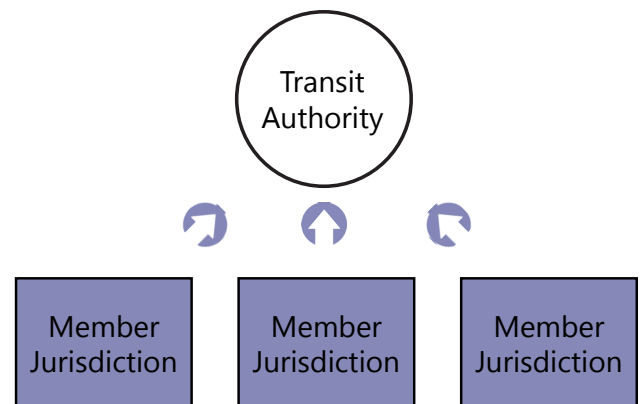
### 3. Interlocal Agreement

Under an interlocal agreement (Public Act 7), two or more local governments would use a portion of their respective powers and revenue to construct, operate, and/or maintain transit. Of Michigan's 82 transit agencies, 8 are structured this way. An interlocal agreement would be flexible in geography and participation, especially as an interim or exploratory entity. Existing County, City, and Township governments that are willing to partner on expanded transit would be able to share taxes and revenue specifically for transit purposes. This would not create a new funding source to maintain funding stability. However, local governments could be flexible in how they contribute funding to the entity established through the interlocal agreement. This option could be advanced with or without the County, but its relationship to the current County-owned transit system (LETS) would need to be determined during the establishment process.



### 4. Transit Authority

While most transit agencies in Michigan are organized as either a city transportation system under Public Act 279 or a county transportation system under Public Act 94, the most common governance structure overall is the public transportation authority under Public Act 196. An Authority can be formed by a municipality, a group of municipalities, a County, or a portion of a County by the vote of elected members of their legislative bodies.



This structure provides flexibility in defining Authority boundaries with the potential to limit them to those jurisdictions with great interest in transit. Member jurisdictions would have flexibility in joining or leaving the Authority and would be able to contribute their tax revenue specifically to the Authority for transit purposes. In addition, the Authority would be able to procure financing on its own. This structure would provide the potential to develop a reliable and independent source of funding through a property tax with the approval of registered voters. However, there may be public aversion to additional taxes and the Authority's relationship to LETS' service and assets would need to be defined.

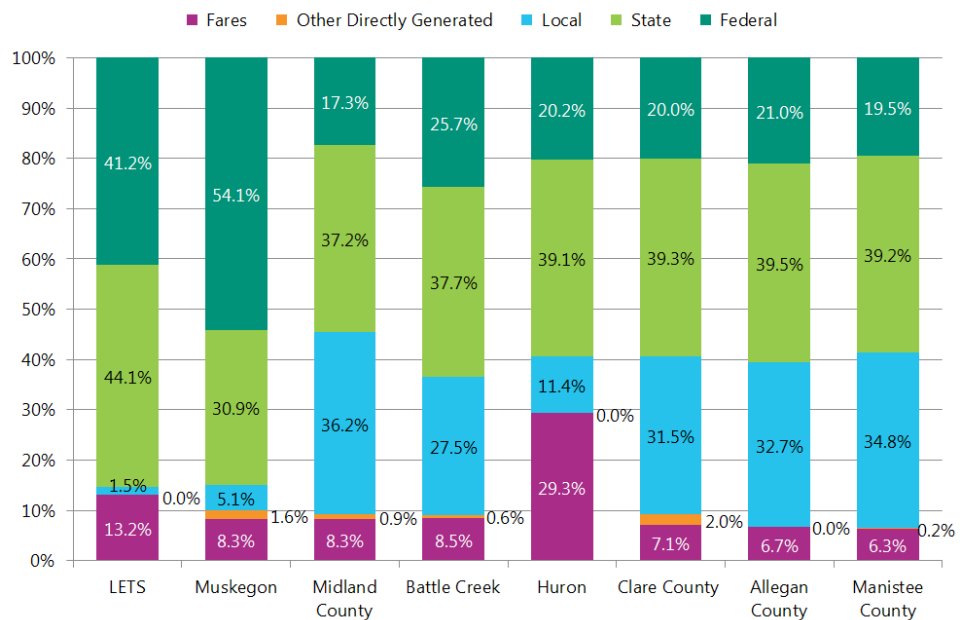
## FUNDING

LETS has nearly maximized its use of federal and state funding resources in providing its current level of service, which is inadequate to meet the needs of Livingston residents and workers. A greater share of local funding is needed to implement the system improvements proposed by the Plan. Projections for the increased operations and maintenance costs indicate that at least 50% of the additional cost of service expansion would need to come from local sources.

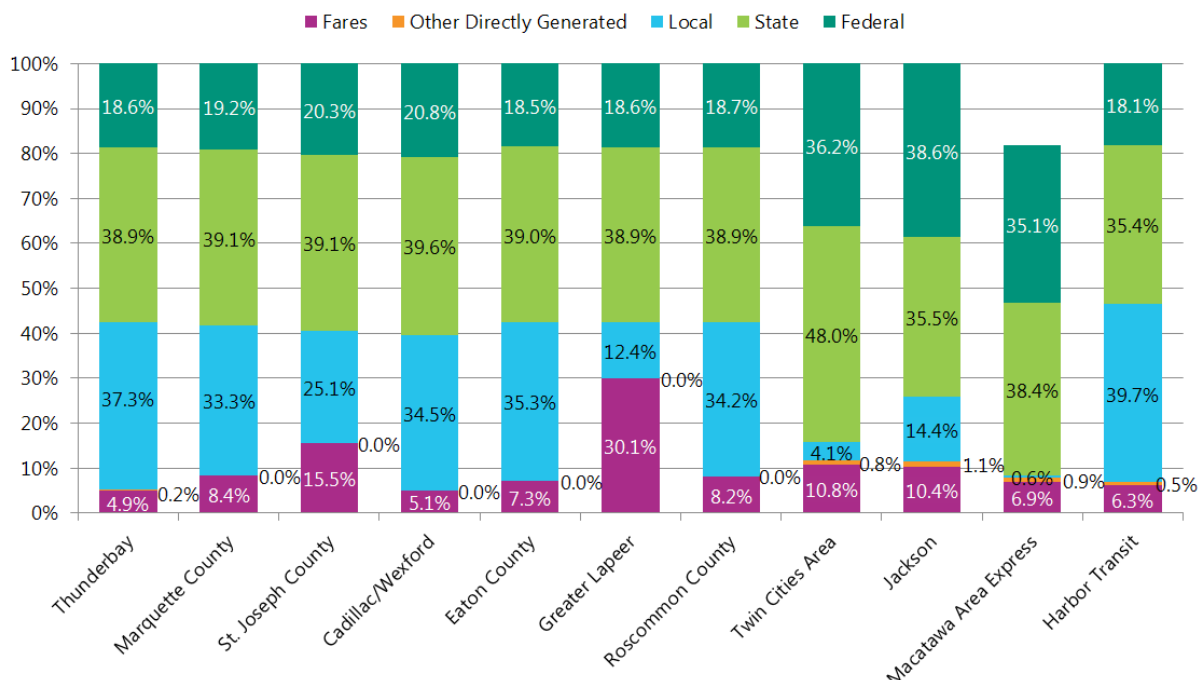
The vast majority of LETS' funding currently comes from federal and state sources.

While this is not inconsistent with other systems of its size, LETS does have a much smaller local share of funding than other city or county transit agencies in Michigan. Transit authorities in Michigan receive slightly less federal funds than LETS, but are generally able to garner a greater share of local funding.

**2017 Sources of Operating Funds for City, County, or Local Government Transit Agencies in Michigan (Source: NTD)**



**2017 Sources of Operating Funds for Transit Authorities in Michigan (Source: NTD)**







## FUNDING

There are a number of smaller-scale funding sources to help implement the system improvements proposed by the Plan. These include:

- Section 5311 Federal Grant Funding (based on ridership in rural areas);
- Creative partnerships (Michigan Flyer, for example);
- In-kind time (volunteer contributions of labor);
- Service contracts with hospitals, universities, employers, etc.;
- Fare increase or restructuring; and
- Advertising on the inside or outside of buses.

However, even with these sources of funding, achieving the Plan will be very difficult without a substantial addition of local funding. Analysis of the Plan elements indicates local support needed in the range of \$900,000 for the short- and mid-term enhancements, ranging up to \$2 million to support implementation of all Plan elements. Generating this level of funding through a property tax (the primary means available for local funding), could be done at a County-wide level or a smaller jurisdiction of interested communities. Potential millage rates for these scenarios are presented on the following page.

## FUNDING

County-Wide	Jurisdictional (5 Communities <sup>1</sup> )
Governance Structures: 1, 2, or 4	Governance Structures: 3 or 4
	
Annual Local Match Needed: Approximately \$900,000	
Millage Rate: 0.10	Millage Rate: 0.23
Estimated Home Market Value of: \$100,000 = \$5 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$200,000 = \$10 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$300,000 = \$15 Annual Taxpayer Impact	Estimated Home Market Value of: \$100,000 = \$12 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$200,000 = \$23 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$300,000 = \$35 Annual Taxpayer Impact
Annual Local Match Needed: Approximately \$2 million	
Millage Rate: 0.23	Millage Rate: 0.51
Estimated Home Market Value of: \$100,000 = \$12 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$200,000 = \$23 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$300,000 = \$35 Annual Taxpayer Impact	Estimated Home Market Value of: \$100,000 = \$26 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$200,000 = \$51 Annual Taxpayer Impact \$300,000 = \$77 Annual Taxpayer Impact

<sup>1</sup>As an example, the 5 communities shown are those with signed resolutions in support of a transportation authority.

<sup>2</sup>Refer to the Implementation Timeline on page 24.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Icons made by various designers from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com):**

- Increasing bar graph - Pause08
- 65-plus - Freepik
- System Efficiency - Good Ware
- Dial-A-Ride phone - Gregor Cresnar
- New Services - Vaadin
- Regional Connections - Freepik
- Multimodal Transportation - Smartline
- Umbrella - Smashicons

**Images sourced from:**

Diversified Fleet

- Fleet vehicles - LETS

Trip Management System Improvements

- RouteMatch laptop screenshot - <https://www.routematch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Brochure-Demand-Response-2017.pdf>
- Veyo smartphone screenshot - <https://veyo.com>

Airport Service

- AirRide bus - [https://www.theride.org/portals/0/Images/AirRide/AirRide/Parking/McNamara\\_Web\\_Size\\_Photo\\_101018\\_3.jpg?ver=2018-10-10-161353-997](https://www.theride.org/portals/0/Images/AirRide/AirRide/Parking/McNamara_Web_Size_Photo_101018_3.jpg?ver=2018-10-10-161353-997)

Passenger Hub

- AAATA Park & Ride - <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DSIoVVuUEAAZM8v.jpg>